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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: MAS STEAMROLLER CONTINUES DESPITE SETBACK

REF: A. LA PAZ 1619
[B.](#) LA PAZ 436
[C.](#) LA PAZ 1085

[¶](#)1. (U) A Constituent Assembly (CA) Directive ruling on June 11 provided a minor setback for the Movement Towards Socialism's (MAS) new strategy of controlling both the majority and minority reports issued by the CA's commissions (reftel A). The MAS' strategy consists of splitting its vote within the CA's commissions to prevent PODEMOS, the main opposition party, from issuing minority reports. Under the strategy, some MAS delegates are directed to vote for the MAS' primary proposal while others are instructed to vote on an alternate non-PODEMOS proposal. The directive enforced the February 14 (reftel B) voting rules agreement which stipulate that the commissions must issue a report that receives an absolute majority. The ruling adds that the report that receives the second highest number of votes will be considered the minority report. The decision also clarified that commission delegates must vote on all proposed reports at the same time. As a result of the directive's decision, the commission "Vision for the Country" will have to revote. In a separate decision, the directive agreed to postpone for the third time, from June 11 to June 21, the deadline for the commissions to finish their reports.

[¶](#)2. (U) Despite the setback, the MAS is still pursuing its vote splitting strategy in certain commissions where it can find enough allied parties. The MAS appears poised to issue two reports in the Commission on Autonomy. Autonomy is the most hotly contested political issue in the CA and in the country as a whole. Bolivia's four eastern or "half moon" departments continue to pressure the GOB and the CA to recognize and codify the July 2006 referendum on autonomy (reftel C). The Autonomy Commission has twenty-four delegates; the MAS with twelve, PODEMOS with four, and the remaining eight divided among eight small parties. Three of the eight small parties are allied with the MAS. MAS delegate Marcela Revollo proposed a minority proposal, saying it represents the wishes of the Movimiento Sin Miedo (MSM), a political party that has no delegate within the CA. The proposal has the support of at least one other small party and another MAS delegate. If Revollo's proposal can garner two to three more votes from the other seven small parties it

could thwart PODEMOS' proposal. Both MAS plans argue for autonomy for indigenous groups, although Revollo's proposal argues for a more gradual approach.

¶13. (SBU) Comment: While PODEMOS may have won the day regarding the voting rules controversy (reftel A), the MAS has clearly not abandoned its strategy to claim both the majority and minority reports out of the commissions. Presumably, the MAS will use almost any means to persuade delegates from small parties to sign on to one of its proposals. Meanwhile, the "half moon" prefects of Beni, Pando, Santa Cruz, and Tarija have vowed and signed a pact to defend departmental autonomy (reftel C). The pact calls for respect for existing departmental borders and intra-departmental units, a concept the MAS proposals would violate. Any attempts by the MAS within the Autonomy Commission (or any other commissions) to dilute the power of the departments is sure to face stiff opposition. End Comment.

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